

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Wedge, at 6:05 PM. The following members were present:

Ms. Sylvia Wedge, Chair	Mr. Michael Buddemeyer	Mr. Jamie Heaney
Mr. Richard Carpenter, V. Chair	Mrs. Terri Cortvriend	Mrs. Marjorie Levesque
	Mr. Douglas Wilkey	

Also Present: Dr. Lusi, Asst. Supt. Jermain, Patti Cofield

A motion was made by Mr. Carpenter and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to R.I. Law 42-46-5, Exception (a)(8) Student Discipline. So voted.

Public Session recessed at 6:06 PM and resumed at 6:21 PM.

1. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Ms. Wedge announced that an Executive Session was held, and no votes were taken. A motion was made by Mrs. Levesque and seconded by Mr. Heaney to seal the minutes of the Executive Session. So voted 7-0.

2. **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Dr. Lusi stated that she is the superintendent representative on the Joint Committee to Establish a Permanent Education Foundation Aid Formula for Rhode Island, which is generating a report that considers alternative methods of financing public education, outlines issues to consider in designing a school finance system, and suggests an approach to reform Rhode Island's state-local school finance system.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion was made by Mr. Carpenter and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to approve the minutes of the meeting held March 13, 2007. So voted 5-0-2. Mr. Heaney and Mr. Wilkey abstained due to their absence from the meeting.

4. **BUSINESS AGENDA**

a) **Discussion/Approval – FY'-08 Budget Reductions.** Mr. Carpenter stated that Dr. Lusi was directed to go back to the budget and reduce areas to meet the cap. He explained that although the public could comment on the proposed reductions, they would not be voted on until the next meeting. The Revenue Projections spreadsheet for FY'08 was distributed, and Dr. Lusi explained each line item. The operational budget packet was also distributed. Dr. Lusi explained the additional information she received and other reductions she made in order to get within the 5.25 percent cap. The bottom line on this budget is \$33,451,956, an increase of 3.96 percent that assumes an overall increase of \$1,273,220.

Dr. Lusi described the reductions that were made to this budget, which included a 3rd grade teaching position, a 5th grade teaching position, and a Special Education teacher (which was a retirement on the local side). She stated that if the Special Education position is refilled, it will be refilled by the Region. She also stated that we have allowed for retirement turnover in our figures. Savings as a result of closing the Prudence Island school are estimated at roughly \$75,002; and savings as a result of moving the 5th grades back to the elementary schools are estimated at roughly \$74,700. Both of these actions need to be formally voted on by the School Committee at the next meeting. Dr. Lusi stated that if Central Administration were to relocate to the 5th grade wing, a savings of \$15,000 in utilities, in addition to substantial building maintenance costs that would need to be made in the coming years, could be realized, and the Central Administration building would be turned back to the town. Dr. Lusi reported that this budget also includes about \$55,600 in additional clerical and support staff reductions districtwide, however, she could not elaborate because she had not spoken with all of the individuals involved. She added that it is possible to move the start time of Melville School to that of Portsmouth Middle School to accommodate the Prudence Island students for transportation purposes. It is also possible to have the 5th grade move to the elementary schools with regard to busing, however, it would not be without some change. She stated that the Melville students would not ride on the same buses as the Middle School students, and Middle School students will be asked to walk further between stops.

Dr. Lusi stated that as we looked at these potential cuts, we tried to keep very clearly in mind our key goal: that the relationship between the student and teacher in the classroom is the most fundamental piece in terms of quality teaching and learning. Although there would be some inconveniences that affect adults, it would not change the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Dr. Lusi stated that we are working hard to offer equity and access to curriculum in every classroom, which is why we are moving towards more co-teaching. We are trying to use our resources, time, money, and people, as effectively and efficiently as possible to meet the goals, and to engage parents and community members as much as possible in meeting these goals. In preparation for next year, Dr. Lusi will be sending letters out to all parents shortly asking if they would like to waive their child's right to bus transportation, which will help maximize our use of the buses. She stated that if the situation changes for a student and they end up needing transportation, they would immediately be added to the bus schedule. Regarding moving Central Administration, Dr. Lusi will be looking at the cost of creating office space at Portsmouth Middle School. She plans to ask students in some of the High School's tech art classes to help us with a design, which we will then cost out. Any capital costs would be built into our building warrant.

Dr. Lusi reviewed the other areas of reductions that were made to the budget since the last draft.

Ms. Wedge opened up the meeting to the public, and several citizens and teachers made comments on the proposed reductions (Michael Barclay de Tolly, Karen Anghinetti, Kristen Heynan, Richard Price, Ted Rausch, Cindy Jilling, Greg Shaw, Karen Gleason, Marianne Raymo, Matt Daly, Frank Teixeira).

Dr. Lusi made it clear that moving the Central Office was not the driving force to moving the 5th grade to the elementary schools. Mr. Carpender said that putting this budget together was an arduous task for Dr. Lusi and her staff, and the bottom line is we need to make adjustments to the budget because we have a 5.25 percent cap. He thinks we can work with the budget she presented. He feels that closing Prudence Island School and moving the 5th grade need to happen, and that moving Central Administration is an off product of that and saves money. Mr. Heaney personally thinks that Central Administration should be moved. He is in support of this budget and is very pleased we got it below the cap.

Dr. Lusi stated that she make it very clear to the Town Council in the budget transmittal letter that there are ongoing conversations and deliberations of the Committee and that things may change. Mrs. Levesque suggested that Dr. Lusi includes the warrant item information in the transmittal letter.

The warrant information spreadsheets were distributed – Technology/Instructional Related Expenses for \$350,000, and Building Warrant 07-08 for \$350,000. Dr. Lusi reviewed the line items on the Building Warrant sheet and stated that there may be some changes once our interim Facilities Supervisor reviews it. She explained that alarm systems were added to the Building Warrant in response to Chief Hebert's recommendation after the break-in at Melville School. She stated that the telephone system is being upgraded systemwide, and the Technology team is working on equality in all schools. In the near future, we will have the capacity for voiceover internet protocol, which will enable teachers to have access to telephone service over the internet. It will also enable us to have security cameras in the buildings. Regarding the Technology/Instructional Related Expenses spreadsheet, licensing districtwide includes subscriptions to virus control software; software for instructional lessons; and subscription to RILINK, the library's inter-loan service. Library books and new curriculum books are not included in the operational budget at all, and without this warrant, there will be no new library books.

Mr. Carpender made a motion that the School Committee approves the 2007-08 School Department budget in the amount of \$33,451,956. Second by Mr. Heaney. So voted 7-0.

Mr. Carpender made a motion that the School Committee approves the Building Warrant for the year 2007-08 in the amount of \$350,000; and the Technology/Instruction Warrant in the amount of \$350,000. Second by Mr. Wilkey. So voted 7-0.

b) **Discussion/Approval – FY'-08 Budget Request.** (see above.)

A motion was made by Mr. Carpende and seconded by Mrs. Cortvriend to adjourn the meeting. So voted 7-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Cofield
Recording Secretary for

Terri Cortvriend, Clerk